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THE
COPPIE
OF A
LETTER
SENT TO A
GENTLEVVOMAN
ONE OF THE
SEPARATION
IN
HOLLAND.

In Answer to a Letter of Hers, written to
her Sister, being a member of one of those Socie-
ties, commonly (though falsely) called the
new *Anabaptists* in London,

Wherein are briefly set downe their reasons against
the baptizing of Infants: together with the grounds of
their denyall, of sprinkling water upon the face in any name
whatsoever, to be Baptisme: And them of the Separation
justly charged for not walking answerable to
their owne Principles.

By R. B.

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THE
COPPIE
OF A
LETTER

Sent to a Gentlewoman, one of
the Separation in Holland:

Mistresse M. B.



ND friend in the common Faith, we wish grace and peace through the knowledge of our Lord Iesus Christ, to be multiplied unto you, & unto all that love our Lord Iesus Christ in sincerity Amen.

We have understood deare friend, from your Sister and ours, that you desire to have communicated unto you, the grounds of our now practise, which your request we thinke reasonable, and our selves bound to satisfie you in. Our houlding and practising of a communion of Saints in Church fellowship, separated from such as, with whom the believer hath no part: 2. Cor. 6. 15. wee thinke you seeke not a reason of it being that which you are convinced of as well as wee; nor do we thinke that you seeke to be informed, that there is an ordinance of God to be submitted unto, by believers, called *Baptisme*: but your inquiry is as wee conceive, wherefore we who have (as we have beene told) had that done unto us in our Infancie, which is commonly called *Baptisme*, should notwithstanding repute our selves as unbaptized persons, and should become baptized, as if we had no *Baptisme* before, for which our practise, we present you with these grounds, onely premising, that to be baptized is one of the counsells of God which may not be rejected, Luke, 7. 30.

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First

Westminster
High

First, infants are not the subjects of *Baptisme*, or are not the persons whom God hath appointed to be *baptized*.

Secondly, the sprinkling water upon the face, which is all that wee ever heard of (that we had) is not *Baptisme*.

Thirdly, that which we in our Infancy had, if sprinkling was *Baptisme*, and Infants the subjects yet by the Separations owne grounds was not Gods Ordinance, seeing the Church was false, where, and the ministry by whom we had it, and where there is neither true Church nor true Ministerie, there can be no true religious administration, and as well as *Mr. Can.* may mannage separation from the *Nonconformists* principles: may we mannage our practise from the Principles of yours, and Master *Can.* wee thinke therein doth well, it being the course which the Lord takes with the *Jewes*, and *Paul* with them of *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* 7. and *Luke* 13. 15.

But to the first of these three, *Infants* are not the subjects of *Baptisme*, as appeareth to us by these reasons,

First, there is in all the word of God no command given to any person or persons, officers, or persons out of office, to baptize them: Now if the word of God be true, where it saith: *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, reproofe, correction, instruction, in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good worke*, 2 *Tim.* 3. 16, 17. the Scriptures giving no direction in the doing of, nor unto any to do that worke, it can be no good worke, and there are of works, but good and bad, and our being so often called to the Law and to the Testimonies, and our being bid to give heed unto that sure word of prophesie, *that shineth as a light in a darke place, with an affirmation that if wee give heed thereunto wee shall do well*, cannot but imply at the least, that we shall omit no duty, while wee do but what is written: and the Baptizing of Infants not being by God injoynd unto, or upon any, nor by his word recorded to have beene done by any, it can be as no good worke, so no worke of light; and the Servants of God may not walke in darknesse. Hence do we in one respect decline that practise as an unwritten unverity.

Secondly, Infants have not in them those requisites that are necessary in that service, which are, *Repentance from dead works, and faith towards God*, *Heb.* 6. 1. & *Act.* 8. 36, 37. *Act.* 2. 38. and wee thinke that of the *English* common Service Book, will be no objection of yours; saying, *yes they do performe them by their surties*:

If you object that though repentance and faith were requisites in persons of yeares, yet it followeth not that those or either of them, are required

- * red of Infants, who by reason of their tender yeares cannot per forme them:

Wee give thereunto three *Answers*.

First, as little as we find in the Scriptures, of the requiring of faith and repentance at the hands of Infants, do we find of the *Baptizing* of Infants: wherefore if the not requiring of Faith and repentance from Infants, be a sufficient exemption to them, from demonstrating either; then in like manner by the same proportion, will the not requiring of Infants to be Baptized, and the not requiring of any to baptize them, be a sufficient exemption both to the one, and to the other: That is our first answer.

Secondly, Wee finde that in all Ordinances, whereunto both old and young indefinitely had access, that which was a requisite in one person, was a requisite in every person, and was found indefinitely both in old and young. To eate the Paschever, *Circumcision* was required, to precede, and that was all that was required, *Exod. 12. 47. 48. 49. 50.* To *Circumcision* was required that the persons were Males; borne in *Abrahams house*, of his Children or strangers, or bought with his money of all the Heathen that were round about, *Gen. 17. 12. 23. 27. Exod. 12. 44.* these requisites wee say, being all that were minded, suited with the condition of every one, and for us to hold out access to *Christ* in his Ordinances, to one by this way, and to another by that, what is it but to make the Scriptures to be of private interpretation, and to make *Christ* who is one, and his way one, to become divided? this is to us likewise considerable.

Lastly, that which will give admittance to one Ordinance, will give admittance unto another of like nature: now if the *Sacraments* (as they are called) of the new Covenant, be like the new Covenant, viz. Spirituall, which who dares deny;

Then that which will give admittance unto Baptisme, will give admittance to the Lords Supper: and thus have we such as neither have faith, nor ever professed to have any, admitted to the Church, and to all the Ordinances thereof, and what is this but to make the new Covenant as carnall as the old. and the subjects of the one as carnall as the subjects of the other: and the blood of *Christ* to be of no more valew, then the blood of *Bulls* and *Goates*, that could not take away sinne, *Heb. 8. 6, 7, 8. 1 Cor. 11. 27. 28.*

Thirdly, the faith of the persons (that ever have any) *baptized* in their Infancie, in the use of their *baptisme* when they come to yeares, can be built but upon humane Testimonie, commonly that of a Parish Clarke: and to have our faith stand in the truth of men, is to have a foundation for it, like that of the wisdom of men: which is opposed to the demon-

stration of the spirit and power of God; 1 Cor. 2. 3, 4, 5.

If you object their being circumcised in their Infancie.

Wee answer, that it *viz.* Circumcision left a marke in their flesh, which they could not but take notice of: and therefore their knowledge of their being circumcised depended not upon the testimonie of others.

Fourthly, they cannot rise with *Christ* in Baptisme, for they being Infants are only passive, and rising with *Christ* in Baptisme, being a part of Baptisme, or being by Baptized persons done in Baptisme, they cannot be baptized, the one halfe of *Baptisme*, being the act of the baptized seeing they cannot act, *Col. 2. 12.* Like as they cannot partake of the Lords Supper that cannot eat, let the administrator do unto them what he can.

And thus we come to the second head, *viz.* That sprinkling of water upon the face of any person young or old is not *Baptisme*; let it be done in what Name or with what Ceremonies it will: which is proved to us by these reasons.

First because that the word which is translated into *English*, Baptize, signifieth to dipp into water, and as sprinkling water upon a thing, is not dipping the thing into water, but the contrary: so is sprinkling water upon a thing not *Baptisme*, but contrary to it. That the *Greek* word which is translated *baptize*, so signifieth *viz.* to dip into water, we have the Testimonies both of the Translators of the Scriptures, of Paraphrases, Expositors, and others, wee will not heere trouble you with many. *Isaack Casaubon* in his notes upon *Math. 3. 6.* they were baptized in Iordan, saith thus, the manner of *Baptisme* was to plunge the person Baptized over head in water, and is that which the word Baptizing fully declareth; and by and by, it was not for nothing that some have disputed for the plunging of the whole body into water in *Baptisme*, for they urged the very word. Doctor *Downe* in his Book of Divinitie hath the same words in effect. *Vrsinus*, in his *Catechisme* in the title of *baptisme* ingenuously confesseth, that the *East Churches* did Baptize by dipping the whole body into water, in the 409. Page of his Book, and this signification: *Answorth* in his Annotations, *Numb. 11. Levit. 15.* confesseth that word to have, but had we not these and a multitude of other Testimonies, the Scriptures in declaring the practises of Gods servants, give us light enough, *Iohn 3. 23.* *Iohn* baptized in Aenon, because there was much water there: which argueth a use of much water in *baptisme*, else that which is there rendered as a reason of his Baptizing in *Aenon*, cannot be reasonably expounded, *Math. 3. 4 5 6. 7.* *Iesus* came unto *Iohn* to Iordan to be baptized, and is said to come up out of the waters when he was Baptized, which intimateth, that he went

went into the water to be baptized, as the Eunuch and Philip are both said to doe, *Acts* 8. 36. 37. 38. Besides these Testimonies and practices, the correspondencie which the *Apostle* makes *Baptisme* to hold with buriall, in *1 Cor.* 15. and *Rom.* 6. *Col.* 2. holds out the same thing.

And lastly the commission given to the *Apostles*, and *Disciples* of *Christ*, is to make *Disciples*, and to baptize them, *Math.* 28. 19. 20. Now no rationall person will say there, that the face is the *Disciple*, no more then they will allow us to say, the nose is the face, yet if the face was the *Disciple*, that is not so much as *Baptized*, how much lesse the *Disciple*;

And wee should aske these part baptizers, but that wee cannot truly call it baptizing, how they know the face should have that besprinkling which they use. If they say the face is the most honourable part:

We answer, that it is not our honour, but our cleansing from our filthinesse which is by *Baptisme* set forth: and no person indued with reason to set out the cleansing nature of water, would take that to wash, which is free from filth, and how know they that honour should sway us in this case, and whereas they say that *Baptisme* comes in the roome of *Circumcision*, they will make it out by their practices, for *Circumcisions* roome was the privie parts, (if we mistake not) which they in their sprinkling used instead of *Baptisme* doe decline. But to summe up all this, if *Baptisme* be a dipping of the whole body into water, as is proved by Testimonies, both divine and humane, then where no part of the body is dipped into water, there can be no part of *Baptisme*, as there is not in that besprinkling, which now adays is falsely called *Baptisme*.

Come we now to the grounds, upon which they of the *Separation* doe proceed, they affirme, that the Covenant of which they hold *baptisme* to be a seale, is made but with beleevvers and their seed; and that the seale is no seale where no precedent Covenant hath beene: now the Parents of the most of them, by their owne confession, were ungodly and unbeleevvers, as the children of the *Separation*, notwithstanding their pretended Covenant commonly prove, and so had no covenant made with them, nor with their seed, nor as they affirme, had their seed, any Covenant made with them till they became beleevvers.)

From which consideration we may frame this argument.

If where no Covenant hath gone before, the Seale of the Covenant be set to, it becomes no Seale, then where no Covenant hath gone before, *Baptisme* being the Seale of the Covenant, if it be set to, becomes no *Baptisme*.

But where no Covenant hath gone before, the Seale of it be set to, becomes no Seale.

Ergo,

Ergo, where no Covenant hath gone before, *Baptisme* being the Scale of the Covenant, if it be let to, becomes no *Baptisme*.

And thus are they quit of their *Baptisme*, by their owne grant: for they which have no *Baptisme*, but that which they had when they were without the Covenant, have no *Baptisme* at all.

Again they commonly affirme that *Baptisme* upon the Baptizer is essentially requisite, that the *baptisme* administred by him may be in force. for say they, *baptisme* asked, by one unbaptized, unlesse hee had a call like *John the Baptist*, is a nullity: and thus if it bee possible their *baptisme* is worse then naught, they themselves being out of Covenant when they had it. and having it for the most part, by persons out of covenant, and by unpaptized ones, or at the best by persons that successively have received their *Baptisme* from *Rome*, where they say all administrations are Antichristian and voide, for *Baptisme* in *Rome* by the most eminent of them, even by learned *Ainsworth*, is called an *Idoll*, and lying signe, and let all men judge whether the being under an *Idoll*, and lying signe, will enable persons to communicate true *Baptisme*. Lastly the Scriptures and Arguments produced by the *Separation* and others, for the baptizing Infants, we shall briefly summe up and answer. and then will leave our grounds with our selves to your judicious censure.

The grand argument of theirs, in confidence of the strength of which they insult like unto *Goliath* against the Armies of *Israel*, is, to all those that are within the Covenant doth the Scale belong: but all the children of beleeving Parents are within the Covenant. *Ergo*. Here wee humbly aske, what covenant it is they intend: if the old Covenant, to the old Covenants Seales we send them, if they say they are all within the New Covenant, we must needs say they speak falsely, if *God* bee true, who is so; for *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob* were beleevers, by the Scriptures owne Testimony, and yet of their children *God* testifieth, though the number of them be as the sand, yet but a remnant of them shall be saved, *Rom.* 9. 27. And of *Isaacks* children, *God* loved one, and hated the other, *Rom.* 9. 13. And *Gods* New Covenant was not made with *Ismael*, *Gen.* 17. 19. 20. Now if the New Covenant be as *Jeremish* reporteth, *Ier.* 31. 32. 33. 34. and as is expressed, *Heb.* 8. 8. and 10. 15. 16. 17. Then *God* who keepeth Covenant must needs (to be true in what he promisseth,) write his Lawes in the hearts of all beleevers children, they being within his Covenant, and except that kindlesse doctrine may be allowed for truth, that men may fall from grace, beleevers children must all be saved, which yet the Scripture denieth, *Rom.* 9. 27. *Isaiah.* 1. 9. and *Rom.* 9. 29.

They further affirme that the covenant made with *Abraham* and with
his

his seed is made with the faithfull and their seed to speake in their own words, in that *Abraham* was but faithfull, and they thinke so of themselves; foolishly erring in not considering, that they (if they be within the *Covenant*) come in, not in the place of *Abraham*, but in the place of his seed, and so are not *Abrahams*, Fathers of the faithfull, there being but one that ever had that Priviledge; now they being themselves but seed to *Abraham*, and the promise reaching but to his seed, and not to his seeds seed, their Children are manifestly excluded the promise or *Covenant*, unlesse they become *Abrahams* seed, and the Apostle teacheth us but one way by which the *Gentiles* doe become the seed of *Abraham*, Gal. 3. and if yee be Christs, then are yee *Abrahams* seed, and Heire: according to the promise, so likewise Rom. 9. 8. and they that are Christs have crucified the flesh, with the passions and lusts: Gal. 5. 24. and Luk. 19. 9.

Lastly, the Lord teacheth us how to understand the seed of *Abraham* to whom the promises were made, that were made to *Abraham* and to his seed, in Gal. 3. 16. now to *Abraham* and to his seed were the promises made, he saith not, and to seeds, as to many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ: wherefore unlesse these persons would runne into manifest wickednesse, (wee might say Blasphemie against God) in making themselves Fathers of Christ, their greatest honour lying in their being Children unto him, (if they be so) the promise cannot descend through them unto any person: The promise being but to *Abraham*, and to his seed, which is Christ, and to those that are Christs seed, which to be, is more then to be seed to them, Isa. 53. 10. compared with Rom. 9. 8. and Gal. 3. Vls.

Their next hould is that of the Apostle, *Act*. 2. 39. for the promise is to you and to your Children, and to all that are a farre off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call, whence they conclude believers to be within the *Covenant*, with their seed.

But we here likewise expostulate in three particulars.

First, What that promise is:

Secondly, who these people were (to whom it was proposed) & the proposall of it.

Thirdly, what is the extent and Latitude of that promise: the promise as is most plaine in ver. 17. and 33. of that Chapter, is the gift of the holy Spirit, which God at this time powred out upon the *Disciples*, and *Peter* in his speech houlds out no more: Repent saith he, and be baptized every one of you, for the remission of sins, and yee shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, it is no lesse plaine & manifest that the persons to whom

Peter so speaketh, were in his Judgement, as yet converts. For all that he heard from them was, what shall we doe, and we find the *Jaylor* went further in his expressions, and yet *Paul* bids him believe in the *Lord Jesus*, intimating that he not yet believed, though he had made a further inquiry after Salvation then these men.

The last thing proposed, was the extent of that promise, what it might be; the place it selfe we thinke in that particular is cleare enough, for *Peters* exclamation must be considered, even to as many as the *Lord* our *God* shall call. for to no more of them; nor of their children, nor of them a farre off, then the *Lord* our *God* shall call, doth *Peter* in any wise apply that promise.

If you object that he applyeth the promise there to no more of them a farre off, then the *Lord* our *God* shall call: but he applyeth it to them and to their Children, absolutely without the reservation of being called of *God*. &c.

Wee answer, that if we take these at this time, to be unbelievers as the truth is, then who sees not the consequence? if we take them to be believers, then all believers Children must have the Holy Ghost, though they never be called, which who will owne? *Let them be believers or unbelievers*, it matters not much in the question in hand, for they were *Jewes*, and therefore were in opposition to the *Gentiles*, who are there by your owne Judgement, spoken of as a farre off, and to those a farre off, as the Objection yeeldeth, yea and that text also, be- longs not the promise, but upon being called, and thus are your children by your owne graunt excluded the promise till they be called.

The next hold they have is in *1 Cor. 7. 14.* which many strike at: we wish you to consider, that the same holinesse of which the Child partaketh, is the unbelieving wife during her Infidelity a partaker of, and whether that be reasonably concluded that thence she may be Baptized, (which yet will hold as well as the other) we leave to you: The opinions of those that deny election, that hold free will and falling from grace, &c. Wee protest against and do abhorre: but because we write a letter, and not a Book, wee must conclude as wee do, wishing peace to all that obey *God* onely, *Amen*.

FINIS.

To my dear friend the Messrs. Messrs. Messrs.
In the Parish of St. Peter's - 17th/29

17th/29

